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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2625  
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 000218

SIPDIS

HQ SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
TREASURY FOR MMALLOY  
COMMERCE FOR 4431/MAC/WH/JLAO  
SECSTATE PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY  
USDA/FAS FOR STEVE FROGETT  
OES FOR DANIELLE WOOD  
EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT FOR MARCELLA SZYMANSKI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2019

TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [EAGR](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: VENEZUELA WILL NOT ATTEND MEETING ON BIOSAFETY

REF: A. SECSTATE 11910

[1](#)B. 2008 CARACAS 140

Classified By: Economic Counselor Darnall Steuart for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) As requested in reftel A, the Agriculture Attache approached university professor and biotech expert Dr. Claret Michelangeli de Clavio (strictly protect throughout) to determine Venezuelan participation at the Mexico City biosafety meeting. Michelangeli, who represented the Venezuelan government at the last biosafety meeting, contacted Aleidis Sandroni from the Ministry of the Environment's Biodiversity Office who would have been the person most likely to attend the Mexico meeting. Sandroni reported the Venezuelan government will not be sending anyone to the meeting as "the Co-Chairs did not notify on time." Michelangeli speculated that the real reason no one will attend the Mexico meeting is because the "Venezuelan government does not trust anyone", often including government officials, to represent its views at many international conferences.

[1](#)2. (C) COMMENT: President Chavez has a well publicized distaste for biotechnology and the multinational firms that sell biotech products (ref B). It seems the Venezuelan government may be concerned that if it were to send a scientist and expert in the field to the Mexico meeting, he or she might reveal that Venezuela's opposition to biotechnology is based on the President's personal views, rather than on science-based policies. END COMMENT.  
CAULFIELD